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ABSTRACT

The situation of Jews who have immigrated to the United States from the former Soviet Union is reviewed, and information is presented to help teachers of immigrant children. The onset of "glasnost" has made Soviets the largest refugee population to enter the United States in recent years. Thousands more are expected in the near future. Most Jews from the former Soviet Union are not religious, but have left to escape personal and institutional anti-Semitism. In general, Soviet Jews are skilled, educated, and possess urban experience; their children are generally well ahead of Americans of the same age in science and mathematics. Because Soviet Jews are resettled by American Jewish agencies, they are usually distributed in large cities with sizable Jewish populations. Problems that these families face include the following: (1) excessive dependence of youth; (2) reversal of breadwinner roles, with women and children employed more easily than men; (3) loss of status; (4) dependent elderly individuals; (5) generational variation in religious experience; (6) limited choice of co-ethnic marriage partners; and (7) Soviet-style attitudes toward authority. Some suggestions are given for teachers dealing with Soviet Jewish immigrant children and their families. There is a 48-item list of references. (SLD)

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SOVIET JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Soviet Jews in the United States

By Steven J. Gold

Introduction

More than 100,000 Soviet Jews have entered the United States since the early 1970s. While immigration almost ceased by the mid-1980s, the onset of glasnost has made Soviets the largest refugee population to enter the United States in recent years (ORR 1989: Fig.1).[1] Due to free exit policies and rising anti-Semitism in the U.S.S.R., thousands of Soviet Jews are expected to emigrate in the near future.

The Soviet Jewish exodus represents the most recent flow of European Jews to the United States — a group that has migrated to this country since the 1600s (Glazer and Moynihan 1963: 138). The majority of American Jews can trace their origins to the same regions of Eastern Europe that spawned the Soviets, but in many ways this recent group is unique among Jewish immigrations. Soviet Jews are notable because they are highly educated, they have lived under communism for generations and for the many resettlement services they receive.

Motives for Immigration

Jews are among the most educated, urbanized and affluent ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. Nearly all who come to America previously resided in large cities of the Russian and Ukrainian U.S.S.R. — Moscow, Kiev, Odessa and Leningrad. While the image of the pious refusenik is common in the media, most Soviet Jews are not religious. More often, they leave the U.S.S.R. to escape personal and institutional anti-Semitism, which has escalated since the late 1960s.

For example, while middle-aged Soviet Jews were able to obtain a college education and professional occupation in the 1940s, '50s and '60s, they feel that opportunities for Jews now are drying up. Adult Jews describe being passed over for promotions and note that

in recent years it has become increasingly difficult for Jewish children, regardless of qualifications, to obtain a post-secondary education and high-level job.

When Soviet Jews apply for their exit visa — an act that is considered traitorous in the U.S.S.R. — they often lose their jobs and must live on the margin of society for months or even years before they are permitted to leave.

Prior to fall 1989, when permission to go abroad was granted, emigres took a train to Vienna, where they stayed for about a week for initial processing. From there, a small percentage flew directly to Israel. A much larger group traveled to the outskirts of Rome where they remained for two or three months while their resettlement to the United States was arranged. Because the Soviet government limits the amount of money and goods that emigres can take out of the country (only about $100 in rubles is permitted), the period in Italy was endured on a minimal budget. Finally, when plans for resettlement to the United States were complete, Soviet Jews flew to a pre-selected destination where they either joined relatives or were sponsored by the local Jewish community.

Since October 1989, Soviet Jews who were granted American visas have migrated directly from the U.S.S.R. to the United States.

Because the timing of their exit is determined by the Soviet government, students may arrive in the United States during any part of the school year. A sizable proportion of Soviet Jews are secondary migrants; consequently, they have lived in other parts of the United States before settling in California.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOVIET JEWISH REFUGEES

Soviet Jews are well-equipped for the task of adjusting to American life. They are skilled, educated and possess urban experience. Further, they enjoy refugee status and therefore are eligible for resettlement services, training programs, cash assistance and permanent resident status in the United States. Finally, due to Soviet policy, the unit of immigration for Soviet Jewish refugees is frequently an intact family (Simon 1985, Panish 1981, Jacob and Frankel-Paul 1981).

Soviet Jews are an elderly immigrant group. Their average age is 40.5 years, with 48% being over 45 years old (Eckles et al. 1982, ORR 1986).[3] Family size for this population is very small — a recent study found that the average Soviet Jewish household consists of three persons (Simon, 1983: 503). Nearly all emigre families have two or fewer children.

The small family size makes for very close relations among family members. In contrast to American children, who are socialized by peer groups, Soviet Jewish youth seem to

be more involved with kin. The need for Soviet Jews to insulate their children from anti-Semitism makes the family an institution of paramount importance. Relatives provide young Soviet Jews with influence as well as emotional support. For example, an uncle may "pull strings" so that his nephew can gain admission to college.

Soviet Jews are highly educated, having attended an average of 13.5 years of school — one year more than the average educational level of the U.S. population (Simon and Brooks 1983, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. 1984)[4]. This high level of education, coupled with the fact that Soviet Jewish women are accustomed to being employed outside the home, often in lucrative professional and technical occupations[5], makes their family income ($20,000 for 1980) substantial for a recently arrived immigrant group (Simon 1985, ORR 1984)[6].

The high quality of Soviet education also benefits school-age emigres. Their preparation in science and math is generally years ahead of Americans of the same age. Because Russian culture values literacy, Soviet Jewish students are frequently well read and have been exposed to Russian, European and American classics (in Russian translation) before arriving in the United States.

The agency that resettles Soviet Jewish refugees — HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) — is long established, well-funded and works in conjunction with other Jewish and public agencies such as Jewish Family Services, Jewish Vocational Services and Jewish Community Centers to offer services from initial settlement to job training and placement, social activities, religious socialization and mental health programs. These agencies generally try to resettle Soviet Jewish immigrants in middle-class neighborhoods rather than the inner-city enclaves where recent immigrants are usually located (Rischin 1963, ORR 1987, Eckles et al. 1982).[7] Furthermore, because Soviet Jews are resettled by American Jewish agencies, they are distributed among cities that already have sizable Jewish populations: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston and San Francisco.

SOVIET JEWISH FAMILY ADAPTATION

Soviet Jews share forms of family solidarity and support that are associated with their ethnic group (Wirth 1928: 141, Glazer and Moynihan 1963, Goldstein and Goldscheider 1968: 101-114, Gordon 1949: 189-208). At the same time, conditions of life in the U.S.S.R. further reinforce their family ties. For example, due to the housing shortage in the U.S.S.R., it is common for extended families of three or four generations to live together in very close quarters.

Soviet Jews' family orientation is indicated by their almost universal claim that the children's future is the main reason they left the Soviet Union.[8] Soviet Jewish parents stated that their desire to improve life chances for their children caused them to sacrifice their own relatively secure status and the easy retirement of their parents.

> I probably decided to leave for my kids. Their future was not really obvious for me. Anti-Semitism is one point. And the second point is that I want my kids to be normal members of society, to be educated. And (in the Soviet Union) I don't think for them it's gonna be possible for them to get an education.[9]

Another comment:

> I have one kid — he is a very good guy — and as any normal parent, I am trying to make him an honest and good person. That's why we have kids. And in the Soviet Union, you can't make him completely honest because there is double standard, double life, double talk, double meaning. . . .
>
> So me, like most of the people (from the Soviet Union) you are talking to, will give you as the main reason for immigration that they wanted to save their kids from that system.[10]

Among Soviet Jews, the extended family often provides means for successful adjustment to life in the United States as well as the motive for exit. Through extended families, refugees obtain a variety of resources — from their initial sponsorship in the United States (ORR 1987) to the necessities of daily life, to job referrals and the investment capital required to open a small business (Gold 1985, 1987, Simon 1985). Soviet Jewish families provide support and advice to relatives recently arrived from Israel, Europe and other parts of North America.

Through this family-based exchange of information, support and resources, some of the social, economic and psychological trauma of the immigration experience is eased. Concurrently, the stability provided by this exchange allows refugee parents to fulfill some of their traditional responsibilities and, hence, offers the families continuity that otherwise might not be obtainable.

PROBLEMS SOVIET JEWISH FAMILIES FACE

Despite their skills, education and family-based resources and their eligibility for resettlement services, some Soviet Jewish families find it difficult to adapt to the United States. Problems they face include the dependency of the young and old, reversals of

provider/recipient roles, status loss, generational differences in religious identity and a scarcity of co-ethnic marriage partners.

DEPENDENT YOUTH

Because many Soviet Jewish parents achieve economic security with relative ease, they may not associate learning American customs with upward mobility as did many groups of proletarian or peasant immigrants who entered the United States at the turn of the century (Howe 1976, Lyman 1974, Thomas and Znaniecki 1920). Instead, such parents may be intolerant of their children's adoption of American customs and values. In their desire to protect their children from alien influences, they may foster excessive dependence and prevent the children from dealing with American life on their own terms (Aronowitz 1984, Hulewat 1981). A Soviet Jew active in her community describes problems faced by Soviet emigre adolescents and their parents' overprotective reactions:

> You know, in Russia how it is so difficult for Jewish kids to go to university. I don't think it's easier here right now. The problem with the kids right now is that we have a lot of dropouts.
>
> Some of the families are kind of supporting these dropouts because the schools here are terrible. And some of our kids cannot get into the good programs because they have a problem with language. They can hardly get into the gifted program or at least the above average program so they are stuck up with the mentally retarded program.
>
> And parents decide that it's better off that they not go to school. I know some of the families where the kids drop out of school and are working with the family business. And the parents decide if the kids want to get high school diploma, they will go to City College at night.
>
> They are not satisfied with the public education, and they cannot afford anything else, so they say, "Don't bother with school, come to work with us."

Refugee children often find it difficult to contend with high expectations for success. A resettlement worker says Soviet parents often realize that their children are under much more pressure than the native-born:

> Having a child, whenever they see me with him, they give me advice. "He is too skinny." "He should have a hat." But yes, they admit, they look at the American children and see how relaxed they are. They say, "Our kids

> always cried and were always nervous and tense." And they said this was because "we were so tense and so crazy about them that we made them crazy."

She goes on to observe that due to pressures and problems in adjustment, many Soviet Jewish adolescents have little in the way of a life of their own:

> I have seen such cases of depressing loneliness in a 20-year-old boy or girl. It is easy if they live on the campus — that's a real chance to meet people. But many don't do it. They come and go to City College or a business school for a year.
>
> They go to work and they live with their parents. If they don't have friends among other immigrants, it's unbelievable.
>
> I know this one 22-year-old. She's beautiful, she's subtle. I think you would say she is a very intelligent young girl. She spends most of her time at work and then she spends time with her family. There is no outlet to go out because she doesn't know how to.

REVERSAL OF BREADWINNER ROLES

Wives and/or children may find employment more easily than fathers, so Soviet Jewish families sometimes experience a reversal of traditional "provider" and "recipient" roles. This transition is often less traumatic for Soviet Jews than for other immigrant groups because Soviet Jewish women are used to being employed outside of the home. Nevertheless, many Soviet women feel reluctant about abandoning elements of the feminine role to which they are accustomed. Paulina Furman, a resettlement worker and Jewish immigrant from Poland, describes Soviet women's desire to retain their femininity:

> You see, I admire Russian women much more than I admire Russian men. They do heroic things. They keep the family together, they cook the goddamn dinners, they clean up. They do it here and they did it there. They keep the family stability and the burden of immigration is on their shoulders. I even think that the women from Eastern Europe are tremendous.
>
> The women are proud. They don't have this problem of the American women. On one hand they seem oppressed and exploited by the men. On the other hand, they feel very proud of being women and very proud of putting makeup on, and they are proud of putting pretty clothes on.

> They don't have this ambiguity of American women who don't know who they are, boys or girls. They are proud of having their hand kissed and having a seat given to them on the bus. They can do both things, they really can.

Reversals of provider/recipient roles also affect refugee children who become breadwinners and/or translators and must take up adult responsibilities at an early age. Children who quickly learn English and job skills are more employable than their parents. This is especially so among recently educated Soviet youth — engineers, computer operators and the like — who have skills that are highly compatible with the American economy.[11] These young refugees become responsible for the emotional, social and economic needs of parents, grandparents and siblings.

Young emigres frequently expressed displeasure about their obligations. Many resented being deprived of the extended adolescence and consumption patterns which constitute major elements of the "California lifestyle." Soviet Jewish youth reacted to their burden in "passive aggressive" ways — by spending little time at home, avoiding parents, refusing to eat mother's cooking or adopting liberal social and political values to which parents object.[12]

STATUS LOSS

Ironically, the high levels of education and previous occupational prestige that are characteristic of Soviet Jews cause some parents to be especially dependent upon their spouses or children (Simon 1985, Hulewat 1981). Because they had a prestigious occupation in the country of origin, they are reluctant to accept a less desirable job in the United States, and so remain unemployed. An emigre exemplifies this position:

> In Moscow, I was chief civil-structural engineer. I used to make huge monoliths — tanks for the oil industry. I was the one who signed plans for many big projects I was the one who gave final approval. Here, I will do the same. I will work volunteer, I will study English, but I will be chief engineer.

Because of this man's refusal to accept less-than-desired work, great pressure was imposed upon his wife to support the family and upon his teen-age son to get good grades and establish connections and prestige for the family within American society.

One way Soviet Jewish families deal with problems of role reversals and status loss is through a "status leveling" process. Those who feel that they are at a disadvantage in social ranking will frequently bring into play information that discredits apparently

successful family members in order to make their situation more equal. This is illustrated by the reaction of the Waldman family to its most successful member, "Igor."

Igor, 30, has a well-paying job as a mechanical engineer, has gone on several business trips and owns a new car as well as many other consumer goods. Igor's English is almost flawless, he masks his slight Russian accent with a false Western "twang." While occasionally commenting on Igor's accomplishments, his cousins, aunt and friends more frequently work to neutralize his achievements by mentioning his crazy driving, how much weight he has gained, his garish taste in music, clothes and entertainment and his enormous phone bill, bloated by calls to his girlfriend still in the U.S.S.R. At least within the family, this process of "status leveling" works to resolve some problems of status loss and role reversal.

DEPENDENT ELDERLY

Unlike most voluntary immigrant groups that are characterized by a youthful population (Simon 1986), many Soviet Jewish families contain elderly individuals. Refugee families experience problems because the elderly have difficulties learning English, finding employment and making their way in the United States. Families who have successfully adapted to American life express concern over the isolation of their elderly relatives.

> My mother is upset that she can't communicate with the kids and they are upset that she is forcing them to talk Russian because she couldn't do anything else. I have to translate at the dinner table when everyone talks in English and she says, "My own grandchildren, and I can't even talk to them. Maybe I made a mistake when I came here . . ."
>
> Back home, she was a doctor, she had a career. Here she is just another old woman who doesn't know English and she is not ready for this role at all. And nobody really needs her right now.

As this quote suggests, a major source of family conflict involves the preservation of the native language. Immigrant children who seek acceptance in American society often are not interested in learning Russian. When children do not acquire the native language, they often become distant from symbols of ethnic belonging as well as their own relatives (most notably grandparents) who do not know English. A Soviet refugee comments:

> I brought all my books and I can teach my son to speak and read Russian — but he doesn't want to speak Russian. We have a lot of problems at home. He doesn't understand too well because he was too small when we

> came, and he prefers English. And I want him to talk to his grandmother, but it's too hard, so we have some problems.

Another important factor in the development of conflict between the dependent aged and their families has to do with the relevance of parental advice. Parents and children alike recognize that the parents' experience of growing up in the Soviet Union provides few insights into the concerns of children who are living in California (Eisenstadt 1956). This problem is most severe among families that include dependent parents, since their knowledge of and experience with American society is so limited. Precisely because the parents' attempts to find work and adjust to America have been unsuccessful, their advice may be rejected by their children. A woman who had been a concert pianist in Odessa describes this experience:

> Here I am free but I am still trapped because I lost my friends, lost my position, I lost my social status. You know it's a very difficult question. And another thing, kids grow up and they are different. You cannot share with them your experience. Because, a lot of people forgot what it was like when they were 15, but another side, they forgot even that when they were 15 they were in another society.
>
> I cannot tell my daughter "when I was 15" because she says, "When you were 15, you were in Russia." Not only generation gap, it's a gap of different culture.

While generational conflicts such as these are observable among all immigrant families (Eisenstadt 1956, Sluzki 1979), such problems are aggravated among highly skilled groups like Soviet Jews. The unprecedented ability of certain emigres to adjust to America quickly widens the gaps in levels of adjustment that may exist within a single immigrant family. For example, Sasha, a 35-year-old Soviet Jew, was making $30,000 a year as a computer programmer two years after he arrived in the United States. His position contrasted dramatically with that of his parents who knew almost no English, did not drive and were unemployed. Consequently, Sasha had to provide their economic support, translation and transportation in addition to managing his own career and family life. To offer the parents some independence, the family resided in a Russian-speaking neighborhood far from his job, thus requiring Sasha to make an 80-mile commute. He comments on the demands created by his dependent parents:

> With my parents, it's not that they are just from a different country, they are from a different world. There are so many things they just don't understand. I have to take care of them. Father has problems with glaucoma, so he has to go to the hospital often. My younger brother, Boris, he just won't do anything for them, so it's all on me. But I have my own life too.

GENERATIONAL VARIATION IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Another form of generational conflict experienced by Soviet Jewish families involves religious identification. The three generations of Soviet emigres in the United States — the elderly, the middle-aged and the young — have each had a different experience with Judaism (Orbach 1980, Kochan 1978).

The elderly are often well-versed in traditional Eastern European Judaism that they learned from their parents or before the Stalinist crackdowns of the 1930s. Middle-aged Soviet Jews grew up in an atheistic environment that encouraged the assimilation of Jews. Consequently, their experience of Judaism is secular. An engineer in his 40s describes his loss of Jewish knowledge:

> No Jewish culture at all . . . you know our family lost it completely. It was a shame. When we went to Vienna (after leaving the U.S.S.R.), they were kind of sorting people who the agencies would be taking care of. And they looked at our family — we didn't look like Jews to them. And they started to ask questions what we know about Jewish life. Do we know any holidays? And we were so ashamed — we didn't know any.
>
> Then I remembered. When I was a little kid, my grandfather gave us Hanukka gold — Gelt. I recalled getting presents. And I told them about the Hanukka Gelt — they started to laugh like crazy.

Finally, emigre children who have spent a few years in the United States frequently have had some exposure to contemporary American Judaism, since numerous religious activities, scholarships to Jewish camps, schools and the like are made available as part of their resettlement program (Goldberg 1981).

Consequently, the meaning and experience of Jewish identity for each generation of Soviet Jews is so different that it offers limited potential for family unification. It is paradoxical that Soviet Jews — religious refugees — are troubled by problems of religious unification.

LIMITED CHOICE OF CO-ETHNIC MARRIAGE PARTNERS

A final problem Soviet Jews face is mate choice. Because of their small population, diverse origins and demographic characteristics,[13] Soviet emigres experience considerable difficulty in finding appropriate partners. Vladim Gutmeyer, a college student, described his awkward blind date with a Soviet Jewish girl from very different class, regional and cultural orientations than his own:

> I guess she knew about me because my father is active at the Jewish Community Center. One day, this Russian girl called up. It was kind of strange, but I agreed to come over. When I arrived, they had set out all kinds of foods and the girl and her family really tried to impress me. They were from the eastern part of Russia. It was sad, she was really looking for a husband, but we had absolutely nothing to say to each other. I was so glad to get out of the house.

Despite the scarcity of co-ethnic partners, few refugees are interested in marrying Americans. A social worker who resettles Soviet Jews comments:

> They say they would like to have American friends, but they don't envision marrying an American because the customs are too different. And it's very surprising to me because some 18- or 19-year-old people say, "What would we have in common?" They already don't see the possibility of getting out of their ethnic group perspective.

Lack of marriage partners makes it difficult for young emigres to start their own lives in the United States and may heighten conflicts between them and their parents.

AUTHORITY RELATIONS, SOVIET STYLE

Teachers, resettlement workers and other authority figures in the United States are often frustrated by the behavior of Soviet Jews who are accustomed to dealing with authority figures and bureaucrats in the Russian style. In the Soviet Union, lower-level officials who deal with citizens are trapped between demanding clientele and powerful, upper-level bureaucrats. To ease some of this pressure, the system tolerates a high degree of flexibility and personalism in the delivery of services. Consequently, Soviet citizens are not immediately impressed by authority figures and expect their service providers to be susceptible to influence and negotiation.

Because Soviets understand authority relations in this manner, American teachers and resettlement staff who work with Soviet Jews may find themselves treated as equals rather than superiors. For example, Soviet Jewish students openly disagree with teachers or counselors, claim that their suggestions or assignments are "stupid" and talk during class. Advice may be ignored or compared with information from other sources. Finally, Soviet emigres see rules as being subject to evasion. In the collectivist Soviet Union, individualism is not a key value, so copying or cheating on school work are not considered to be serious infractions.

Hence, Soviet Jewish students and clients often appear aggressive, disrespectful or manipulative to American authority figures. However, emigres are generally warm, serious and cooperative students and clients. Their style does not indicate some deep-seated arrogance, but rather reflects their indifference to American-style displays of respect.

CONCLUSIONS

Soviet Jewish immigrants are highly skilled and generally enter the United States in intact, cooperative families. They enjoy a high quality of resettlement services; consequently, they often adapt rapidly to the United States (Simon 1985).

Soviet Jewish families do, however, face problems in adjusting to American society. These include status loss, dependency of the young and the old, generational conflicts and difficulty in finding co-ethnic marriage partners. In turn, these problems often yield differential adjustment to American life among family members. While certain emigres use their skills, education and resources to "make it" in American society, others — the aged, the young, those who are less skilled (or have untransferable skills) and those who are less flexible — find adjustment to be much more difficult. Precisely because many Soviet Jews do adjust rapidly, the difficulties encountered by others are worsened because they are regarded as the result of personal failure.

While the initial accomplishments of Soviet Jews are impressive, most have been in the United States for only a decade. It will take many years before their general patterns of family adaptation become fully discernible.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. Because they were subjected to official ideologies in the U.S.S.R., Soviet Jews dislike formal lectures about appropriate attitudes, beliefs or ways of behavior. They are more open to learning such lessons through example or their own experience.

2. As refugees, Soviet Jews feel helpless. Hence, they greatly enjoy being allowed to express their knowledge and opinions about various subjects. A trusting relationship between Americans and Soviet refugees can be facilitated by letting emigres feel that they are competent and in control of certain interactions or situations.

3. Despite their status as refugees, Soviet Jews do not hate the U.S.S.R. or even the Soviet system. Rather, they tend to regard their country of origin with mixed feelings. Hence, frequent anti-Russian or anti-communist comments may offend emigres.

4. Soviet Jews are put at ease if you are able to converse about daily life in the U.S.S.R. Hedrick Smith's readable book, *The Russians*, offers many details about life in the Soviet Union. Its anecdotes can provide a basis for conversations.

5. Soviet emigres may be prejudiced against minority groups. It is important for them to learn about the history and culture of American ethnic groups.

6. In recent years, thousands of Pentacostalists and Armenians have left the U.S.S.R. along with Jews. Hence, it is incorrect to assume that all Soviet emigre students in the United States are of Jewish ethnicity.

NOTES

1 In fiscal year 1988, 20,033 Soviet refugees (mostly Jews and Armenians) entered the U.S., followed by 17,594 Vietnamese, 14,598 Lao and 6,309 Iranians (ORR 1989: Fig.1. The U.S. government expected to admit 50,000 Soviet refugees in 1989 (Woo 1989: B12).

2 This policy was followed until October 1989. After that date, all Soviet Jews granted exit visas to Israel were required to go directly there from the U.S.S.R. The option of selecting the U.S. as a destination inVienna was eliminated by an agreement between the Government of Israel and the Bush administration. After October 1989, Soviet Jews wishing to emigrate to the U.S. were required to apply for entrance on a case-by-case basis.

3 Soviet Jews, whose average age is 40.5, are 15 years older than the average age of immigrants entering the United States between 1970-1980 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983: Table 196).

4 Soviet Jews' education is exceeded by only one group of recent immigrants — Indians (Bureau of the Census 1983: Table 196).

5 While only 3% of American women are engineers or technicians, 22% of Soviet Jewish women in the United States were employed in these occupations in the U.S.S.R. Further, 60% of Soviet Jewish women were professionally employed in the Soviet Union. In contrast, 16.5% of American women have professional occupations [1980 data] (Eckles et al., 1982: 29, *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1984: 415).

6 As of 1981, Soviet Jews' unemployment rate of 9.7% was only slightly higher than that of the U.S. population as a whole (Simon 1985, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1984). Further, 26% of time-eligible Soviet refugees are dependent upon cash for medical assistance. This is higher than the rate for Polish refugees (12%) and lower than that for Vietnamese refugees (64%) (ORR 1987: 34-35).

7 Financial resources of Soviet Jews, however, are limited because the Soviet government prevents them from bringing assets with them.

8 A 1981 survey of Soviet Jews throughout the United States (Simon and Simon 1985) found that ensuring a secure future for children is one of the major motives for emigration. Another study found that Soviet Jewish parents hope their children will complete at least four years of college and find professional employment in the United States (Simon 1983).

9 Since 1967, the number of Jews permitted to receive a university education in the Soviet Union has dropped by more than 50%. In 1979, few if any Jews were admitted to Moscow University, the most prestigious Soviet institution of higher education (Jacobs 1981: 7).

10 This explanation for exit, while commonly expressed by Soviet Jews, is not universal. In the words of one emigre: "I don't believe and I don't trust people who say, 'I left Russia only for the kids . . .' It is first of all for **yourself** and only then for your kids."

11 Young emigres were familiar with IBM computers and other American equipment acquired during the detente period prior to 1978. Hence, they were immediately enjoyable.

12 For example, one Soviet Jew rebelled against his anti-Communist parents by adopting the political outlook of his liberal American classmates.

13 In addition, women, comprising 54% of the total population, outnumber men, and females' median age is significantly higher (41.4) than men's (33.1) (ORR 1987: 11).

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